

REMARKS

Status of Claims

Claims 1 and 6-23 are pending, of which claim 1 is independent.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter of claims 5-11.

Claims 1, 6-8, 12, 13, 15 and 18 have been amended to correct informalities in the claim language and to more clearly define the claimed subject matter. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of original claims 2-5 and additional subject matter which is supported by page 10, lines 10-14 and page 10, line 31 to page 11, line 1 of the originally filed specification. Care has been taken to avoid introducing new matter.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102/103

Claims 1-4, 12-14 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Numai (US 6,351,311). Claims 15-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Numai.

Applicants respectfully submit that since claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of original claim 5, claim 1 and all claims dependent thereon are patentable over the cited references. Thus, Applicants request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections of claims 1 and 12-23 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102/103.

CONCLUSION

Having fully responded to all matters raised in the Office Action, Applicants submit that all claims are in condition for allowance, an indication for which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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